



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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### **Fire Danger Increases with Drought and Triple Digit Heat** *Forestry officials, Fire Commission warn of wildfire conditions*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. – (June 29, 2012)** – Wildfire danger in Kentucky is typically not a problem after green-up in the spring; however, June has proven to be atypical due to the lack of rain over the past couple of months. Firefighters from the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) and local fire departments across the state have responded daily to wildfires this month, and the fire danger is expected to worsen as drought levels and temperatures increase.

“It has been nearly 25 years since we have seen this number of wildfires in the month of June,” said Leah MacSwords, director of KDF. “It’s quite simple, the drier it gets, the higher the fire danger. We need the public to understand that any activity that creates a spark can easily result in a wildfire right now. More importantly, if we don’t see a break in the drought, the wildfires in this state will not only continue, they will worsen.”

Although most wildfires in Kentucky are caused by careless debris burning and arson, forestry officials note that recent wildfires have been the result of a number of different causes including sparks from vehicles, farm equipment and downed power lines.

“These extreme weather conditions not only increase the fire danger, but also make it very taxing on the firefighters working to eliminate the fires,” said Kentucky Fire Commission Executive Director Ronnie Day. “The majority of Kentucky’s local firefighters are volunteers. They are the ones on the front lines, along with the paid firefighters, battling the wildfires. We appreciate their efforts and the opportunity to partner with the Kentucky Division of Forestry.”

With hot and dry conditions continuing through the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, officials are also concerned about fireworks and campfires. As a result, more than 70 Kentucky counties have implemented burn bans to restrict any outdoor burning. County burn bans are issued by the county judge-executive to address local conditions and are enforced by all law enforcement officers with assistance from KDF. Burn bans generally prohibit campfires, bonfires and burning of leaves, debris, grass, crops and woodlands. They may also prohibit or regulate fireworks if included in the ban.

For more formation about outdoor burning restrictions and how you can prevent wildfires, contact the Kentucky Division of Forestry at 1-800-435-0555 or visit the division’s website at <http://forestry.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>. Please visit <http://forestry.ky.gov/wildlandfiremanagement/Pages/default.aspx> for a list of county burn bans and to view current fire activity in the state.

#### **About KDF**

*The Kentucky Division of Forestry, headquartered in Frankfort, manages nine district offices with forestry staff assigned to every county in Kentucky for the purpose of providing services to the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The agency is responsible for preventing and suppressing wildfires on state and private lands as well as providing assistance to landowners and communities for the purpose of sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of our forests.*

#### **About Kentucky Fire Commission**

*Since 1972, the mission of the Kentucky Fire Commission and the State Fire Rescue Training agencies has been to train and certify volunteer and career firefighters of Kentucky. In 1997, the Postsecondary Education Improvement Act was mandated bringing about the approval of an associate in applied science (AAS) degree in fire/rescue science technology. At that time, the Kentucky Fire Commission was established within the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.*